

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 144

**Introduced by Assembly Member Blumenfield
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Anderson, Feuer, and Ruskin)**

March 10, 2010

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 144—Relative to Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 144, as introduced, Blumenfield. Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.

This measure would proclaim the month of April of each year as Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, During the Second World War, Raphael Lemkin,
2 a Polish lawyer of Jewish descent, coined the term “genocide” to
3 describe a coordinated plan of actions aimed at the destruction of
4 essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim
5 of annihilating a group itself, for example, by disintegrating a
6 group’s political and social institutions, culture, language, national
7 feelings, religion, and economic existence, and destroying the
8 personal security, liberty, health, and dignity, and the lives of
9 individuals belonging to the group; and
10 WHEREAS, Following the Holocaust, on December 9, 1948,
11 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 260
12 (III) A, the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and
13 Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, declaring genocide to be a
14 crime under international law, and defining genocide to include

1 the commission of certain acts, including killing members of the
2 group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the
3 group, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring
4 about a group's physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing
5 measures intended to prevent births within the group, and forcibly
6 transferring children of the group to another group, with the intent
7 to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious
8 group; and

9 WHEREAS, Existing laws recognize certain genocides,
10 including the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, and various
11 other genocides have been conducted throughout history, including
12 those in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur, and in other parts of
13 the world; and

14 WHEREAS, Many genocidal acts throughout history have
15 occurred during the month of April. In April 1915, the Turkish
16 government began rounding up leading Armenian religious,
17 political, and intellectual leaders in the capital of Istanbul and
18 murdering them. This pattern was copied across the country,
19 leading to the deaths of more than one million Armenians with the
20 relocation of survivors to the Syrian desert. In April 1933, the
21 Nazis issued a decree preparing the way for the "Final Solution,"
22 in which they defined non-Aryans as "anyone descended from
23 non-Aryan, especially Jewish, parents or grandparents. One parent
24 or grandparent classifies the descendant as non-Aryan ... especially
25 if one parent or grandparent was of the Jewish faith." In April
26 1975, the Khmer Rouge entered the Cambodian capital, Phnom
27 Penh, and initiated massacres that emptied entire cities into "killing
28 fields," leading to the death of some two million people. In April
29 1992, the siege of Sarajevo began, leading to the deaths of more
30 than 2,000 Bosnian Serbs. In April 2004, the Rwandan President's
31 airplane was shot down, leading to the killing of moderate leaders
32 by Hutu hardliners, and in the next three months 800,000 Tutsis
33 were slaughtered. In April 2003, the displacement of Darfurians
34 began in Sudan, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths and
35 the displacement of millions; and

36 WHEREAS, In 2008, the Prevention of Genocide Task Force,
37 convened by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the
38 American Academy of Diplomacy, and the United States Institute
39 of Peace, issued a report finding that in order to prevent future
40 genocides and mass atrocities, effective prevention measures must

1 be implemented before a crisis has erupted, and that educating the
2 public can help to protect individual rights and promote a culture
3 of lawfulness that will help prevent future genocides; and

4 WHEREAS, The State of California condemns, and desires to
5 combat, all acts of genocide; and

6 WHEREAS, Educating the public about the evils of genocide
7 and commemorating victims of genocide, including the adoption
8 of a Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month, are effective
9 tools that will further these goals; now, therefore, be it

10 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
11 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature hereby proclaims the
12 month of April of each year as Genocide Awareness and Prevention
13 Month; and be it further

14 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
15 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.